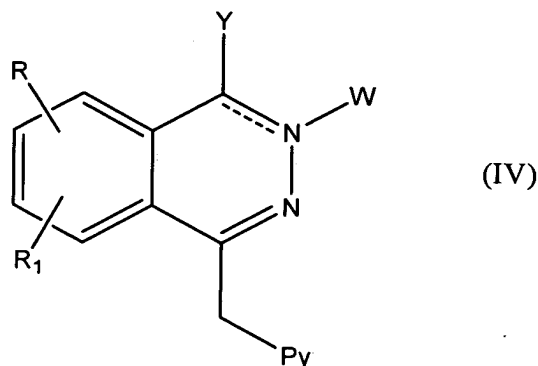


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. - 10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) A process for preparing phthalazines of formula



wherein R, R₁ and Py have the above reported meanings; Py represents a 2, 3 or 4-pyridinyl group optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from halogen, nitro, cyano, oxo and carboxy:

R and R₁, which may be the same or different between them, represent hydrogen, C₁-C₆ alkyl or a group OR₂ wherein R₂ represents a linear or branched C₁-C₆ alkyl, a C₄-C₇ cycloalkyl or a C₁-C₆ polyfluoroalkyl;

----- is a single or double bond;

Y represents two hydrogen atoms or a group =O when ----- is a single bond, or when ----- is a double bond Y is hydrogen, cyano, (C₁-C₄)-alkoxycarbonyl, amido, optionally substituted aryl or heterocyclyl, (C₁-C₈)-alkyl, (C₁-C₈)-cyclylamino;

W is absent when ----- is a double bond or, when ----- is a single bond, it represents

a) hydrogen;

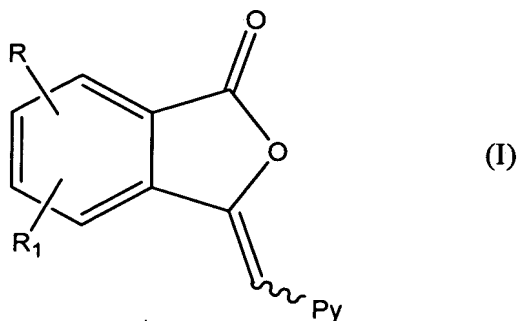
b) (C₁-C₆)-alkyl optionally substituted by aryl, heterocyclyl or by a group COR₅ wherein R₅ is hydroxy, (C₁-C₄)-alkoxy or hydroxyamino;

c) -COR₆ wherein R₆ is hydrogen, aryl, aryl-(C₁-C₆)-alkyl, optionally alkylated or monohydroxylated amino, hydroxy, (C₁-C₄)-alkoxy, carboxy, (C₁-C₄)-alkoxycarbonyl,

$\text{HN}=\text{C}(\text{I})\text{NH}_2$, or (C₁-C₄)-alkyl optionally substituted by a heterocycle;

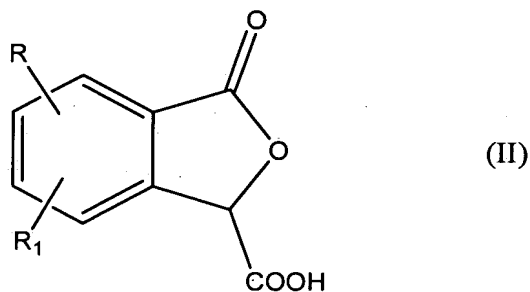
d) (C₁-C₄)-alkylsulfon-yl;

which comprises the preparation of the intermediate of formula I



wherein R, R₁ and Py have the above reported meanings; ~~according to the process of claim 1~~ and the bond indicates both the isomers E and Z;

wherein said process comprises reacting a compound of formula II



wherein R and R₁ have the meanings above reported; with an aldehyde of formula



wherein Py has the above reported meaning; by heating of the mixture of the compounds of formula II and III in the presence of an anhydride and optionally in admixture with a suitable solvent.

12. (New) The process according to claim 11 wherein Py represents a dihalosubstituted 4-pyridinyl group.

13. (New) The process according to claim 12 wherein Py represents a 3,5-dichloro-4-pyridinyl group.

14. (New) The process according to claim 11 wherein one or both between R and R₁ represent OCH₃.

15. (New) The process according to claim 11 wherein the compounds of formula III are employed with respect to the compounds of formula II in a molar ratio from 0.5 to 4.

16. (New) The process according to claim 15 wherein the compounds of formula III are employed with respect to the compounds of formula II in a molar ratio from 0.8 to 1.5.

17. (New) A process according to claim 16 wherein the compounds of formula III are employed with respect to the compounds of formula n in a molar ratio from 0.9 to 1.1.

18. (New) A process according to claim 11 wherein the anhydride is an organic anhydride.

19. (New) A process according to claim 18 wherein the anhydride is acetic anhydride.

20. (New) A process according to claim 11 wherein the anhydride is used in an excess.